

Name: William D. Fletcher (Bill)

Position: 1

- Please list any previous elected or appointed offices you have held.
Have been on the USD 232 School Board since 2007.
Was on USD 500 School Board in Kansas City, Kansas (1979-1982)
- What is your current occupation and where are you currently employed?
Retired. Owned my own business - Kansas Land Management, a mowing and landscaping business.
- Please list the school(s) where you completed your secondary and any post-secondary education.
1970 Graduated from Washington HS in Kansas City, KS.
1975 Graduated from Kansas State University
- What degree(s) do you hold?
B. S. in Business
- How long have you lived in the district? Do you have school-aged children living at home? If so, what school(s) do they attend?
I have lived in the district since 1982. All three of my daughters attended and graduated from the De Soto Schools. My six grandchildren currently attend De Soto Schools (De Soto High School, Lexington Trails Middle School and Starside Elementary) One of my daughters (Melissa Wible) teaches 6th grade math at Lexington Trails Middle School.
- Please describe your community involvement and activities.
Past member of the De Soto Chamber; Involved in De Soto Girls softball league; Have been a monetary sponsor of the athletic department in the high school for many years.
- Why have you chosen to run for the USD 232 Board of Education?
I am concerned about the "open enrollment" that the State of Kansas is mandating, special education funding and the potential for radical groups to prey on our school district.
- What will you do as a board member to ensure you have adequate knowledge and information on which to base your decisions?
I have been on the Board for 16 years so I have a good knowledge of our district's history. I frequently talk to citizens in the community to obtain their opinions about current school board issues. I care about the shareholders and I try to represent their viewpoints in the decisions that the Board makes. I am also a long time citizen of the community and feel vested in its success.
- How would you foster collaboration between the board, parents/guardians, school staff, and community members to ensure everyone's input is considered in decision-making processes?

I talk with parents/guardians, staff and teachers at the schools and in the community. I listen to what they have to say about our district's successes, needs and/or problems. Based on this information, I investigate the issues, suggest improvements to fellow Board members or make decisions in votes during the Board meetings.

- When funding becomes critical, what do you see as priorities for our school district?

We need to be vigilant about the open enrollment issue. We need to plan so that we can accommodate a potential influx of students and still maintain quality education while keeping our patron's taxes low. Funding for special education is also very important. We need to support these students in all ways possible so that they can get a quality education like their counterparts.

- If funding becomes more abundant, what do you see as priorities for our school district?

We need to increase the salaries of our teachers, paraprofessionals, custodians, and maintenance workers. These people all work extremely hard to give our students a quality education in a pleasant, safe environment. Their salaries do not reflect the amount of work they do nor the responsibilities they assume. I also think it would be important to evaluate shortening the steps in the classified pay scale.

- What do you view as opportunities for improvement in USD 232?

We built the Cedar Trails Exploration Center and developed the CAPs program to promote student growth into technical careers. This is a great addition to our school system. I would like to see this expanded to involve more partnerships with corporations.

- What do you view as USD 232's main areas of strength?

One of the top school districts in the State of Kansas (Rated 2nd in whole State of Kansas).

Have a very high graduation rate (Was 97.3% in 2022).

Have dedicated, qualified teachers who have stayed with the district for a long time. Former students even come back to teach in our district.

- Is there anything else that you would like to share with our members?

I have been honored to serve the patrons of the De Soto School District. I have never missed a meeting in the 16+ years that I served. I feel that I need to be present and represent patrons on the Board. I am pleased that my family grew up in De Soto and that my children also came back to this area to raise their children. I am proud of what the district has accomplished during my tenure.